
THE
BRASHER
BULLETIN

Newsletter of the Society of
Private and Pioneer Numismatics

S.P.P.N.



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EDITOR'S OBSERVATIONS

Dear Members,

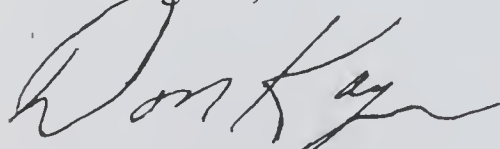
We are attempting to upgrade the Bulletin with every issue and with your help (articles and suggestions) and the yeoman work of Jim Vallier in putting it all together, I believe we have done that again. Set aside some time and leisurely read through the wealth of information here. How about a letter to the editor with your comments? I can handle it.

In this issue of the Brasher Bulletin prior to the Chicago A.N.A., we would like to remind the members to:

1. Please pay your dues before they go up.
2. Attend the Chicago A.N.A debate - Michael Hodder v. T.V. Buttrey on "False Western American Bars".
3. Submit articles for publication.
4. Submit one free advertisement request or announcement. (Business card size)
5. Review our reading recommendations and take a visit to a museum or a gold rush site during this sequicentennial.

We just returned from the A.N.A. Summer Conference where we co-instructed with A.N.A. Executive Director Edward Rochette. One of the students is preparing a short article on the class – Numismatic Treasures of Colorado. Needless to say, we had a great time. Hope to see as many S.P.P.N. members as possible in Chicago.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Kagin", with a stylized, flowing script.

Donald H. Kagin, Ph.D.

MINUTES OF THE S.P.P.N. MEETING, SACRAMENTO, A.N.A.

The meeting was called to order by Don Kagin. It was announced that we had a special guest, Mr. Fred Holabird, who had agreed to give an abbreviated talk and slide presentation on the wreck of the S.S. Central America. Fred is one of the very few people to have viewed the treasure in its entirety. Although still under court order not to discuss proprietary information, Fred gave a wonderful talk about the S.S. Central American information that is in the public domain. S.P.P.N. members all agreed that this special presentation was extremely informative. Thanks again, Fred.

An open-minded forum concerning important business matters included:

Advertisements

-It was agreed by all in attendance to allow advertisements by members in the bulletin. This will help defray costs and increase business and knowledge among our members. Suggestions include:

- One free ad per member to start in the next bulletin, located in the back of Bulletin under "Classified."
- All ads one size and one rate so no member dominates

Members are encouraged to call, see or write to us with ideas and/or their desire to advertise.

Membership Cards

-David Showers has some remaining and we will update next meeting. David also has a few remaining rare back issues that we will attempt to have photocopied to satisfy several special requests.

Raise Dues or Limit Publication to 3/yr.

It was determined that it would be more effective to go back to 3 issues a year and save on postage costs, which almost equal's membership dues. Many members are behind in paying their dues and will be dropped. We are trying to hold down publication costs but dues must be increased next year. Life memberships are still available this year only for \$200.00 and Member/Dealer donations have been helping offset rising costs.

CA. Small Denom.
Gold in C.W/N.N.

-Jack Totheroh commented on Prof. Robert Landes Article on getting California Small Denomination Gold listed in Coin World and Numismatic News. After commenting on this, it was agreed by all present that Mr. Totheroh himself was the most qualified to follow-up on this. His auction pricing and private treaty sales reports would be invaluable.

California Pioneer
Fractional Gold

-S.P.P.N. member Ron Gillio gave an update concerning the reprint of California Pioneer Fractional Gold. With books unavailable and prices escalating, all members agreed and hoped that this project can be completed and go to press soon.



THE OLD FORTY-NINER

Though so poor that at length he's a proverb become,
The old Forty-Niner's far happier than some;
While with pick and with shovel he prospects around,
And at every excitement he's sure to be found.

Though hard be his fate and to toil be his lot,
But little he cares if but health he has got;
In the future he lives, which always gleams bright,
For some day he thinks a rich lead he will strike.

With his long grizzley beard, his mule and his dog,
To find some new diggings he gaily doth jog,
Where fancy doth lead him, 'tis there he does roam,
With no wife or children to care for at home.

What marvelous tale she can tell of the past;
Those bright golden days while his money did last;
And toils on, still hoping to see them return,
While rambling about from Feather to Kern.

If at times he partakes a little too free
And gets on what he calls "a bit of a spree",
Such hearts that are warm and congenial in soul,
Are always the first to "sip from the bowl".

With a friend in distress he will share his last crust,
Or divide, if he has it, the last of his dust,
And never let pass by his old cabin door
Without aid and comfort, the sick and the poor.

On the quartz mining mania his head it is sound
Among those vile sharpers he never is found;
From fraud and deceit he's free of all stain,
For an old honest miner he still does remain.

Signed: Waif
 Muggins Flat
 December 10, 1863

(Reprinted from the files of the MARIPOSA GAZETTE)

PIONEER AUCTION RESULTS & ACTIVITY (HAMMER PRICE ONLY)

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Bowers & Merena Chesapeake | May 30, 1999 | |
| Lot 2514 1851 Humbert \$50 880 Thous | Salt Water UNC | \$12,000 |
| 2518 1854 Kellog & Co. \$20 K1B | EF | 3,800 |

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------|
| Superior Stamp & Coin | May 31 – June 1, 1999 | |
| Lot 3902 N.D. C. Bechtler \$5 Rutherf. With Star | 134g | 6,000 |
| 3911 1851 Humbert \$50 880 Thous | PCGS 61 | 25,000 |
| 3929 1860 Mormon \$5 | PCGS 55 | 20,000 |
| 3933 1860 Clark Gruber \$10 | PCGS 50 | 9,500 |
| 3943 1872 Washington Head BG722 | PCGS 67 | 2,800 |

| | | |
|---|---------------------|-------|
| Ira & Larry Goldberg, Dr. Ariagno | May 31 – June 1 & 2 | |
| Lot 929 1849 Moffat & Co. \$10 | PCGS 40 | 7,500 |
| 945 San Francisco Mint Silver Bar 20.45 oz. | | 525 |

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| Heritage Numismatic Auctions | June 3, 4, 1999 | |
| Lot 5354 1849 Morman \$5 | VF20 | 7,250 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------|
| Bowers & Merena Bass | May 7-9, 1999 | |
| Lot 2070 1851 Humbert 887 Thous K4 | AU55 | 27,000 |
| 2072 U.S.A. D.G. \$20 900 Thous K18 | Proof 63 | 90,000 |

California Small Denomination Gold is reported by J. Totheroh

The S.S. Brother Jonathan Treasure Coins

The Treasure Ship S.S. Brother Jonathan – Her Life And Loss 1850-1865 by David Q. Bowers is highly recommended for purchase by S.P.P.N. members. Dave Bowers has once again produced a highly readable and extremely well documented narrative.

The Brasher Bulletin had promised to publish reports surrounding the inside information concerning the Brother Jonathan. As we have told the membership before, individual and corporations involved with Treasure coins are bound by confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements. These agreements are entered into either on behalf of the treasure seekers (Deep Sea Research, L.L.C., Columbus America Discovery Group, etc.) or the Courts. Once an agreement has been reached between the courts and the principals involved, these confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements can be lifted. In the case of the Brother Jonathan, this has been done by the State of California, who Kagin's represented.

Kagin's was hired by the State of California to view and evaluate on behalf of the States Land Commission. Approximately 1,200 gold coins were recovered from the shipwreck. Two

hundred coins were awarded to the State which were to constitute a representative sample of the total.

On December 10, 1998, Don Kagin, myself, Mr. Joseph Rusconi – Deputy Attorney General, and Mr. Peter Pelkofer of the California State Lands Commission met at the Bank of America in San Francisco to view the Treasure. Mr. Fletch Alford – Counsel for Deep Sea Research, Mr. David Flohr, Mr. James Wadsley, Mr. Gene Seton and Mr. Mark Borckardt – representative for Bowers & Merena, were present. The coins had been impounded by U.S. Marshalls Service and had been expertly cleaned and conserved by Robert Johnson of San Francisco. Because of the unique location of the wreck and the proximity of the fresh water from the Smith River, the overall condition was very exceptable. Upon reviewing my notes, the problems were hairline scratches and discoloration but overall the coins were in remarkable condition considering.

The Pre-Auction viewing was well attended. Deep Sea Research hosted a Pre-Auction celebration for investors. A film on the recovery effort was shown and refreshments were provided. The sale itself was attended by collectors, dealers and investors, filling the Auction Room. The prices realized have been analyzed in Coin World and the Trends section has been adjusted accordingly. It was rumored that Deep Sea Research was offered more by private treaty than the sale realized. Dave Bowers spoke at A.N.A. Summer Conference and said that the investors realized at a 2-for-1 profit. S.P.P.N. will keep members informed on the insurance company's planned sale of their 8% of the Central America Treasure.

We would like to draw attention also to the final John Pittman sale. It is being held before A.N.A. and the catalog is available via the internet. A highlight of note, the extremely rare 1865 British Columbia \$10 Pattern in silver and a 1862 British Columbia \$20 struck in gold. Albert Kuner, engraver of California Pioneer coins, as well as the 1860 Morman \$5 pieces prepared the dies. Both of these coins should realize record prices.

EXTREMELY RARE 1862 BRITISH COLUMBIA \$10 IN SILVER



BOOK REVIEW BY DAVID KIPEN:

“A WORLD TRANSFORMED: Firsthand accounts of California Before the Gold Rush” by Joshua Paddison, a free-lance writer and research historian who lives in San Francisco

PRE-GOLD RUSH TRANSFORMATION

HISTORIAN SEES EXPLOITATION IN EARLIER AREA

What the Civil War is to the South, the Gold Rush is to California. At a century's removed, it still interests us, shadows us, implicates us. From Headwaters to Ward Valley – wherever the pursuit of specie still leads to the endangered of species – the vein of California history that the Gold Rush opened is nowhere near played out.

Everyone knows that the exploitation of California's resources didn't end with the Gold Rush. But an enthralling new book from Berkeley's Heyday Press suggests that it didn't begin there, either. “A World Transformed: Firsthand Accounts of California Before the Gold Rush” gathers excerpts from 12 pre-Gold Rush journals to make its case that, as San Francisco historian Joshua Paddison argues in his introduction, “Eighty years of Spanish, Russian, Mexican and American intrusion had changed the region as significantly and pervasively as did the subsequent gold rush.

“In fact, many of the attitudes historians ascribe to the Forty-Niners – an aggressive entrepreneurial spirit, a utilitarian view of nature, violence and racism towards indigenous peoples – had already been brought to California by the missionaries, merchants, settlers and soldiers who trickled into the region between 1769 and 1848 and settled there. Paddison focuses on early account of the Bay area. A few of his choices, like Richard Henry Dana JR's still-rousing “Two Years Before the Mast”, have been continuously in print, from the early 19th century boom in adventure and travel narratives up through that same boom's present day revival.

Others, like French naturalist Adelbert von Chamisso's witty diary of the month he spent around San Francisco Bay in 1816 during the Russian ship Rurik's circumnavigation of the globe, have languished untranslated or in archives until the recent, welcome upsurge in California studies on college campuses.

Of all of the Renaissance men drawn to California over the years, Chamisso numbered among the first. A fabulist and poet, whose verse would later be set to music by Robert Schumann, he also became the first botanist to classify California's state flower, the golden poppy – which he named *Eschscholtzia californica* in honor of his shipmate Johann Eschscholtz, the Rurik's surgeon. Chamisso proves just as generous a traveling companion for the reader. He'll pause impishly to point out whenever “a good missionary had dipped his cloak too deeply into the blood of the grapes and swayed visibly under the burden”.

“A WORLD TRANSFORMED: Firsthand Accounts of California Before the Gold Rush”

BOOK REVIEW BY DAVID KIPEN continued....

When sober the padres of Mission Dolores placed even greater burdens on their charges, who belonged to the Miwok, Ohlone and other tribes. Twentieth century hindsight has little to teach Chamisso on the subject. “The contempt that these missionaries feel toward the peoples to whom they are sent,” he chides, “seems to us to be an unhappy circumstance in view of their pious purpose. None of them seems to have concerned themselves with their history, customs, beliefs or languages”.

Yet “A World Transformed” is no exercise in simplistic Euro-bashing or “noble savage” cant. Editor Paddison, a graduate student in U.S. history at San Francisco State University, has recruited such diversity of opinion among the available memoirists – who also include explorer George Vancouver and one of the Portola expedition’s spiritual guides. Juan Crespi – that any editorializing of his own would have courted redundancy.

Paddison introduces his book with grace, returns for a few pages after each selection to place the next one in historical context, and otherwise lets his well-chosen diarists and period illustrations do the work for him. Respectfully, he eschews interference – an approach many of the historical figures in these pages would have done better to emulate.

But do we buy Paddison’s thesis that the 80 years before 1848 changed California “as significantly and pervasively as did the subsequent gold rush”? Maybe, maybe not. As Paddison’s helpful time line demonstrates, California’s non-Indian population had only reached 13,000 by the time of James Marshall’s find at the Coloma sawmill, whereas the next few years would bring in fully 300,000.

But the disparity between pre- and post-1848 California in terms of historical attention paid – books published, classes taught, articles written – slights early California even more. For his successful effort toward redressing that imbalance, Paddison deserves our lasting thanks.

Any month now, hundreds of Rotarians and Jaycees in counties to the east of us will stop shaving again, the better to impersonate prospectors in time for their communities’ Gold Rush Days festivities this summer. These re-enactors can’t help reinforcing the idea of the Gold Rush as California’s Civil War. But just as no one can hope to understand the Civil War without first studying the antebellum South, any grasp of the Gold Rush depends on an understanding of the Spanish and Mexican eras that preceded it. That understanding now begins with a single well-edited, attractive volume.

An Encyclopedia of California Coiner's and Assayer's Related to Numismatics, 1849-1863.

Researched and Compiled by Dan Owens.

Introduced and Edited by Q. David Bowers.

Foreword by John J. Ford, Jr.

To be published by Bowers & Merena and Stack's.

An Encyclopedia of California Coiner's and Assayer's Related to Numismatics, 1849-1863 represents a compilation of my in-depth research project on the numismatic history of the California Gold Rush. The text is several hundred pages in length, and contains a wealth of information which cannot be found in any other single source. Several chapters in my book will be devoted to the assaying firms who made the gold ingots recovered from the wreck of the S.S. Central America. An Encyclopedia of California Coiner's and Assayer's Related to Numismatics, 1849-1863 will be available for purchase this year.

Rush for Riches, Gold Fever and the Making of California

By J.S. Holliday

University of California Press; 355 pages; \$55 cloth, \$29.95 paper.



Wells Fargo's Hush-Hush Deal With Pancho Villa **(Firm helped ransom silver bars he stole to finance his rebellion)**

The infamous Pancho Villa built his revolutionary army with cash secured in a secret deal brokered by Wells Fargo Express, according to 86-year-old documents made public yesterday.

Letters and memos obtained by the University of California's Bancroft Library help answer one of history's mysteries – how did Villa manage to convert silver bars obtained in a train robbery into the cash needed to pay for arms and men?

"This is a real find" said Bancroft curator Walter Brem, who presented the documents at a press conference., "It's a real smoking gun."

Wells Fargo seemed unimpressed.

"It seems like he's making much ado about nothing," said Robert Chandler, historian at the Wells Fargo History Museum in San Francisco, who had not been aware of the company's link to the Villa money.

"We were a neutral intermediary between the guy who owned the bars and the guy who had the bars," he said after looking at the field-office documents, which the Bancroft obtained from a private dealer.

It has long been known that Villa, a former bandit, returned to Mexico from exile in the United States in 1912 with a tiny band of men that he quickly built into the dreaded "Division del Norte" army that propelled him to power amid Mexico's continuing series of revolutions at that time.

His big break came on April 9, 1913, when he stole 122 silver bars from a train in Northern Mexico, a haul then worth about \$160,000, equivalent to about \$2.6 million today.

That robbery enabled Villa to overcome “his main problem,” which was “obtaining arms to equip his men and money to pay them,” according to what is perhaps the most authoritative work on Villa, the recently published 1,032-page “The Life and Times of Pancho Villa” by University of Chicago historian Friedrich Katz.

But Villa somehow had to convert the numbered silver bars and get arms, which was not easy with authorities searching for the bullion and an embargo on U.S. arms into Mexico.

That is where Wells Fargo stepped in. The owners of the silver – mining firms with mines in Mexico – were willing to pay Villa to get the silver back, but they were not able to establish contact with him.

So Wells Fargo and its Mexican subsidiary, which handled the shipment, arranged a “strictly confidential” deal, in the words of one memo. Wells Fargo agents arranged a meeting with Villa, and a Wells Fargo employee was held hostage by Villa while the mining firms came up with the money to buy back the bars, according to the letters and memos exchanged among Wells Fargo employees in Los Angeles, El Paso and Mexico.

Villa received either \$50,000 or 50,000 pesos (then worth \$25,000) from the mining companies – the documents are ambiguous on the amount – in exchange for 93 of the 122 bars. Villa said that his men had taken the rest of the bars, according to the documents.

“It really jump-started his re-entry into the revolution in 1913,” Brem said.

In addition, the documents reveal that a Wells Fargo agent in Mexico apparently tipped Villa to the silver shipment and then joined forces with him. Villa's memoirs mention the train robbery, but not how he got rid of the bars.

Wells Fargo Express, which operated separately from the bank, was keen to avoid adverse exposure over the deal.

A May 10, 1913 letter written by the top Wells Fargo official involved in the correspondence, Executive Vice President Elmer Jones, insists that the firm "took no part in the payment of this money" and stressed the importance of avoiding anything that could be construed "as aiding and abetting the enemies of the government."

"Wells Fargo kept the whole thing very, very hush-hush," Brem said.

Ironically, the firm's executive, Jones was soon to have a more dangerous, personal run-in with Villa. According to a book about the company, called "Wells Fargo: Advancing the American Frontier," the episode that Jones would recall clearly many years later came the year after the train robbery, when Villa summoned Jones and another Wells Fargo official to his headquarters and demanded that the firm continue to do business on the northern railroads that Villa had seized.

They refused, and Villa ordered them held and executed. But, according to Jones' account in the book, Villa met up with a "charming and beautiful French girl" in a café that evening and forgot to give the execution order, allowing Jones and his colleague time to be rescued by friends in the Mexican government.



WELLS, FARGO & CO. A daguerreotype made in the early 1850's shows the San Francisco office of the historic express and banking house which contributed so greatly to the development of the west. Wells, Fargo had offices in most towns in the Mother Lode and handled millions in gold for the miners who knew its reputation for honesty and dependability.

JDN INGOT ASPEN MINE

Copyright Fred Holabird, July 8, 1999

Introduction

One of the great things about working in the mining industry is that I get to see a number of wonderful ingots that have been passed down through families over the years. About ten years ago, one of my clients showed me an ingot from Colorado that was just fantastic. The blebs of gold seemingly floating in a mass of silver were reminiscent of some of the first silver-gold bars that I had ever helped pour as a junior production geologist back in the late 1970's.

The JDN Ingot is a presentation ingot, probably to the mining engineer or superintendent of the mine, or perhaps a mine owner or discoverer. The ingot measures $1\frac{7}{32}$ " x $\frac{25}{32}$ " on the top surface, $1\frac{5}{16}$ x $\frac{23}{32}$ on the bottom surface, and is $\frac{13}{32}$ " thick.

Aspen Mine History

The history of the Aspen Mine dates back to the arrival of several exploring parties in Colorado in the early 1860's. After the discovery of gold placers around the Denver area in 1858, and subsequent placer and lode gold discoveries in Gilpin County in the late 1850's and early 1860's, miners spread out over the rugged terrain of Colorado in search of more gold.

The Aspen mine was on and in the Hazelton Mountain Mining District, two miles from Howardsville, near Silverton, Colorado in San Juan County. The first mines were found in 1870 in this region. They were the Little Giant and the Mountaineer¹. With the discovery of these mines, came the influx of people, and the mining community of Silverton began shortly thereafter in 1871. By 1872 there were hundreds of emigrants, and in 1873 it was noted that 400 prospectors had made two to three thousand mining claim locations. The richness of the district was not known until about 1874. At the time, the closest post office was in Del Norte, a scant 125 mile journey. The region was remote, and until 1873, was formally occupied by the Ute Indians, who took unkindly to the invasion of white prospectors, but soon learned to trade with them. They relinquished their rights to the region in 1873, and it was divided up into six mining regions.² The area was so remote that only two good wagon roads accessed the entire area.

The Aspen mine itself was located during this huge rush of 1874 on a quartz vein running northeast to southwest, and dipping 15 degrees to the south. The shallow dip made for easy exploration, and soon assays of up to 140 oz/t silver and 60% lead were obtained from the vein. By 1878, miners had driven a tunnel 300 feet long with workings on two levels 150' long each, and the mine had produced about \$100,000 in bullion. By 1878 the owners were George Green & Co., Wm. Mulholland, Thomas Blair, and D. Reese. The neighboring claim, the Susquehanna, was owned by G. Ingersoll et al and had produced \$30,000.³

Famous Mining Engineer Rossiter W. Raymond, at one time US Commissioner of Mining Statistics and later president of the prestigious American Institute of Mining Engineers, wrote in 1875 that the Aspen was "one of the three best mines in the Hazelton Mining District, located at the north end of the San Juan Belt." Its neighbors, the Susquehanna and the Grey Eagle were rated the other two. "The gray copper in these veins assays from 500-2000 oz/ton silver. The galena ...50-80 oz/t." "A small quantity of native silver has been taken out of the Aspen."⁴

By 1876 the Aspen Mine was owned by the San Juan Smelting and Refining Co, with N. A. Foss as Superintendent. Their first class ore was 4.5 feet wide with a pay streak of 10-15 inches, mostly galena in

¹ F. Hall, *History of Colorado*, 1890, VII, pp200-206

² Raymond, Ross, *Mineral Statistics West of the Rocky Mountains*, 1877, p324

³ Corbett, *Colorado Directory of Mines*, 1879, pp353, 398.

⁴ Raymond, Ross W., *Mining Statistics West of the Rocky Mountains*, 1875, p384.

quartz, running 60% lead and 255 oz/ton silver. There was also significant copper and gold. "The coin value per ton was \$329.69." A 175' shaft was noted.

News of the mine slowed by 1879, usually correlative with a lack of activity or production.

Some Background on Historical Mine Research

Research on mines is not without political turmoil. There were no reports of the Aspen Mine by Horatio Burchard, U. S. Director of the Mint, in 1880, who had taken over the workload of a frustrated Ross W. Raymond, US Commissioner of Mineral Statistics. In 1877, there was a fierce fight in Congress over whether and how to continue the reporting of mines and mining activity. The financial world of America had demanded a continuance of the information. It was from these complicated, detailed reports that investors made their decisions to buy stock. However, the political front could absolutely not understand the costs involved with such an operation. In their small world on the east coast, it seemed unfathomable that someone might have to travel *weeks* just to report on a *single* mining district. Thus it would take more than a year to report on all of the western mines, which is precisely why all mines in the west were not reported in each volume of *the Mineral Resources West of the Rocky Mountains*. To Congress, this was simply too much. They couldn't see their way to pay for this ongoing study, and besides, it had taken them a year and a half to get Raymond's last volume to press, which was finally published in 1877, though it was due out in 1876. Raymond's predecessor, J. Ross Browne had the same problem in 1868, but was a man of conscience, and performed his last year's work at his own cost. To help pay for this, Congress authorized him to sell thousands of his 1868 work privately, and it now has been found published by three different publishers.

Burchard became no exception to this governmental circus act. To make it a complete "three ring circus", Congress began the United States Geologic Survey, with Clarence King at the helm. Their purpose, however, was not to report on mineral production, but to publish scientific journals of geology related to the largest of the known ore deposits. As a result, Congress disbanded the Mineral Statistics post, and threw the duties to Burchard, the Director of the Mint. His first report on mineral statistics for the Mint was thin, and lacking. After great input was received, his staff began gathering reports from all the western mining regions.

The Aspen Mine After 1880

Activity at the Aspen mine had greatly curtailed by about 1880. In 1881, Burchard noted that the chief mine on Hazelton Mountain was the Aspen, though he admitted that the mine was basically idle during 1879-1880. While he listed it as one of the key producers, his estimate of county production was way off. He suggested \$5,000 in gold and \$25,000 in silver were all that had been removed from the county⁵. This was easily refuted by the published treasure shipments found in newspapers and other banking sources. The contradictory information can become confusing, and is a good illustration of how mine reporting changed under Burchard, since Congress no longer allowed site visits.

By 1882 Burchard had acquired more information on the Aspen. The mine had become part of an agglomeration of mines, a land gathering process that became necessary in order for mines to grow larger. The neighboring mines all became one. "The Aspen, Susquehanna, Mammoth, Legal tender, McGregor, Matchless, constituted the most developed property of the district." He noted more than a mile of underground workings, 1000 feet of raises and winzes, and shafts, along a 3-8' wide vein of galena and gray copper ore in quartz owned by the San Juan and New York Smelting Co.⁶ At the same time, *the Report on the Development of the Mineral Resources...of Colorado for the Years 1881-2* by J. A. Smith (1883) reported the production of the Aspen at \$300,000. Vanderwilt in his *Mineral Resources of Colorado*, 1947, reported that the Aspen was the largest producer of the region.⁷ Balk in his epic work *Mines, Miners, and Mining Interests in the United States*, 1880, stated that there were only 1300 tons of ore

⁵ Horatio Burchard, *Report of the Director of the Mint*, 1881, p429-432

⁶ Burchard, 1882, pp547-8

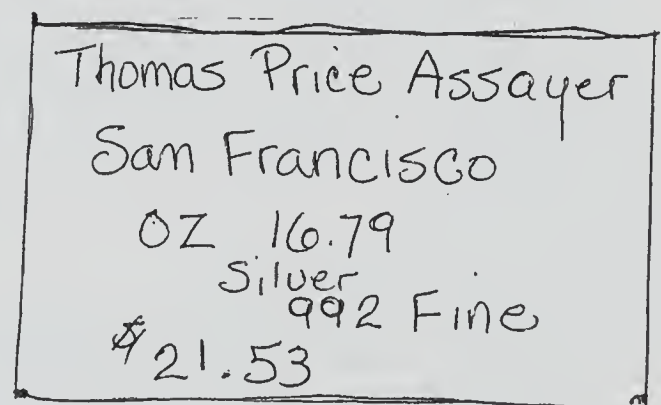
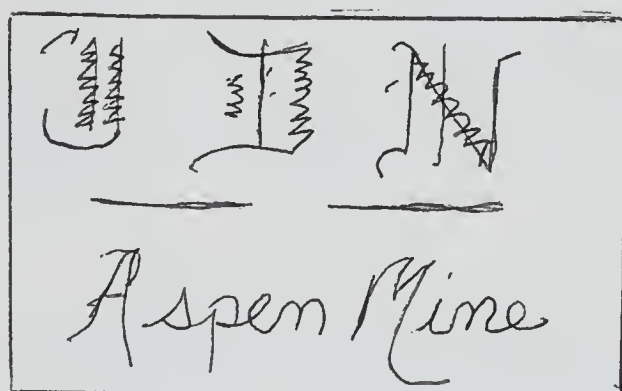
⁷ Vanderwilt, p432

treated in the whole county by 1879, with a net product of 84 oz gold and 109 oz silver.⁸ This once again illustrates contradictory data, which was probably in error. The reported size of the underground workings bears credence to the \$300,000 production figure. Clearly there was no standard of reporting.

In 1883 it was reported that the Eagle Bird Consolidated Mining Co. bought or lease/optioned the property from the San Juan and New York Smelting Co., but did not begin work on the Aspen.⁹ That year, Corrigan and Lingane's *Colorado Mining Directory* listed the owners as the San Juan & New York Smelting Co. with H. Amy president, W.A. Bell as VP, Geo. F. Peabody as secretary, and Spencer Trask as Treasurer, the last two from New York. The local agents were GM and JA Porter in Durango, where their smelter was located. They reported 1.5 miles of underground workings and ore averaging 45% lead and 90 oz/ton silver.¹⁰ It was not unusual for mines that had a higher percentage of silver to leave out information on the gold. In the last example, the silver was worth about \$90-100 per ton. If the gold as a by-product ran ½ ounce per ton, it would only add \$10 per ton, and thus was insignificant to them.

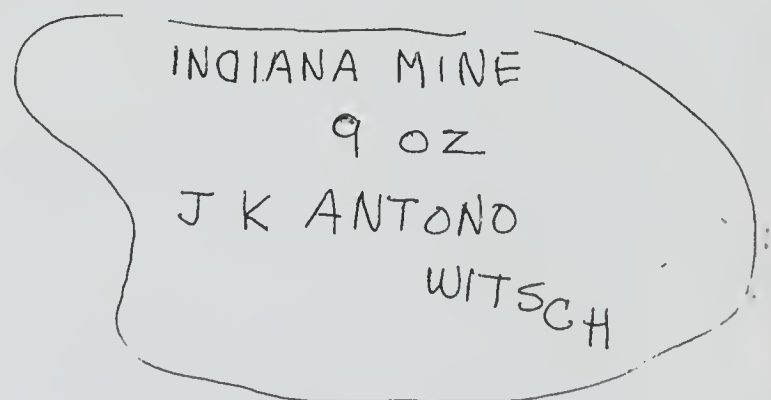
Information on the Aspen mine is lacking after 1884. It appears that there was no more mining under the Aspen name. Perhaps more mining took place under a new name given to the mine, a common place occurrence for new investors. Most likely, however, the mine simply ran out of paying ore. Regardless, activity under the name Aspen Mine ceased by 1884.

The identity of JDN will have to wait until I get a chance to scour the pages of more mining newspapers to look for the various mine superintendents of the Aspen.



New Ingot Discoveries ↗

Gold Splasher
Northern Calif
Circa 1930's? →



⁸ Balk, p972

⁹ Burchard, 1884, p290

¹⁰ Corrigan and Lingane, *The Directory of the Mines of Colorado*; 1883, pp615, 459, 233.

**CINCINNATI MINING AND TRADING CO. 1849 \$5.00 OVER
PACIFIC & CO. 1849 \$5.00 OVER MEXICAN 2 REAL \$5.00 PIECE**

Recently a most unique Pattern Trail piece surfaced again. It was originally offered by Harry G. Wigington, a collector of obsolete paper money specializing in American Bank Note Company. The piece was researched by Mr. Wigington and sent to Abe Kosoff for the future research and possible sale. Abe Kosoff was particularly fond of rare Pioneer pieces. He purchased the J.S. Ormsby 1849 \$10 piece struck over the two real of Ferdinand VII Mexico mint of 1815 at the Garrett sale. At one time he also owned the Pacific Company Dollar over the Spanish real of 1776.

Mr. Wiginton's research came up with the following points:

1. Approximate weight is 55 grains – silver, possibly struck over a Mexican 2 real piece, which was clipped or shaved at the edges, accounting for the non-uniform or uneven shape of about 22x23 MM in diameter.
2. Being a pattern or trial piece in appearance, it was first struck with obverse dies (on both sides of the piece) of the \$5.00 Pacific Company.
3. Then, restruck as a trial piece again, except, with the obverse die of the \$5.00 Cincinnati Mining and Trading of 1849. This being over the obverse strike of the \$5.00 Pacific Company. Letters "CINCI" are still visible.
4. Again, the coin was restruck on the other obverse \$5.00 Pacific Company die strike, except, from measurements, a \$2.50 reverse die was used of Pacific Company. The eagle's left wing, neck, and head are smaller than the eagle on the \$5.00 or \$10 Pacific reverses. The faint letters of OMA (Company) are also smaller; but are in relationship to the eagle, supporting the assumption, that the \$2.50 die was used, rather than the \$5.00 reverse die.
5. Therefore, it appears 3 separate dies were used on this piece, involving two separate companies, with two denominations of the Pacific Company's coinage.
6. The die break brings up the question – did this pattern piece limit the further production of the \$5.00 Cincinnati Mining and Trading Company pieces?

7. This piece ties together two distinct firms whose coinage had not been associated in any known manner. It has been reported that a letter appearing in a Cincinnati newspaper states that members of the Company had their equipment discarded along the way. If this did occur – probably, based on this coin, the same firm struck the pieces of Pacific Company, as well as Cincinnati Mining & Trading Company. Adams believed that Broderick & Kohler struck the Pacific pieces. Thus, perhaps they struck both series of coins for these firms. S.P.P.N. members comments appreciated.

Cincinnati Mining & Trading Co.
Exceedingly Rare Gold \$10



Pacific Co. \$2.50 Pattern



Who Were They

Where did they go?

The first coloners

by George Hull

Throughout the centuries mankind has searched for the fulfillment of his needs. Among the many needs have been the desire for wealth and the curiosity to understand the history of ones culture.

During the early 1800's, after the completion of the buying of the Louisiana purchase in 1803, the national need was one of exploration of the huge land acquisition. Thomas Jefferson, in 1804, sent Lewis and Clark on an heroic journey of exploration all the way to the western coast of the United States. Soon the need for wealth, in the form of beaver skins, had replaced the sole goal of exploration. Hence, the era of the mountain man was born. John Colter, who had been with the Lewis and Clark expedition; Jedediah Smith, William Ashley, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Joe Meek, David Thompson, Hugh Glass, and other brave souls rapidly carved a spot in history for themselves; perhaps the most heroic of the leaders of the development of our country. In their search for richer trapping areas, they explored the West and started opening up the frontier for the great migration which was to follow.

The next massive wearch for riches was the gold rush which was ignited by James Marshall's discovery of a few flakes of the precious metal in the millrace on Captain Sutter's property at Coloma, California. Although gold had been discovered earlier in Southern California in June of 1841 forty-five miles north westerly of Los Angles Citry and easterly of Mount San Bernardino. The village near with discovery was the little town of San Francisquito.

The gold rush created an entire new set of needs for a generation of men far from the comforts of home and readily available supplies and services. The needs, which were as varied as the towns and cities from which the miners came, are well illustrated by the merchandise that was advertised in the local newspapers. A sample list from the Alta California newspaper included, from one advertisement:

Among which are:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Ready-made Clothing | Saddles |
| Hardware | Powder and Shot |
| Boots and Shoes | Harnesses |
| Medicines | Percussion Caps |
| Crockery and Glassware | Rifles |
| Pickles | Double barreled Guns |
| Trunks | Single - do |
| Tin-ware | Revolvers |
| Carpet bags | Rule pistols |
| Gold scales and weights | Provisions |
| Wagons | Powder Flasks |
| Wooden ware | Shot belts |
| India rubber goods | Game bags |
| Bowie knives | Blankets |
| Cigars | Whips |
| Mule Bridles | Tobacco |

Their needs were not limited to the necessities of life. Finley, Johnson, and Company were already advertising luxury items by March of 1849 in San Francisco newspapers.

FLOUR, WINES, BRANDY &c. Fresh flour, sherry wines in barrels and cases; maraschmo, mosto, claret, cecilia and priorato wines, cognac, super, cordials, gin, ale, brandied fruits, chocolate, sugar crackers, hams, sugar, coffee, rice, prints, shirts, clothing, boots, shoes, caps, segars, iron bedsteads, leaf and chewing tobacco, and many other desirable articles, for sale by:

FINLEY, JOHNSON & Co.

March 22, 1849

The solutions to laundry and cleanliness that we so take for granted were difficult to find. Wyld's Guide to Prospective Immigrants to California described some possible solutions.

" A group of these stalwart, bearded men, most of whom are in the early prime of life, fine, healthy, handsome fellows, . . . make a tour ensemble that is very awful to contemplate," observed the Annals. But most 49er's looked that way out of necessity rather than any desire for show. L.M. Schaeffer explained why he looked the way he did when he returned to San Francisco from the diggings in 1849. "My clothes were stored on board a vessel lying in the stream; those I had on were not only well worn, but, like Joseph's coat,

of varied colors. But as I had not yet secured a permanent lodging-house, and was not engaged in any business, I did not care how I looked, or what kind of a figure I presented for in truth, I was not singular in this respect."

Everyone's clothes were dirty too. That is "the greatest privation that a bachelor is in this country exposed to," Wyld's Guide warned would-be immigrants to California. Laundresses charged \$5-\$8 to wash and press a dozen shirts and, even then, "you have to court them besides," complained Wyld. Some men discarded their shirts when they became dirty; it was just as cheap to buy new ones. Others sent their dirty shirts to Hawaii and China. "A vessel just in from Canton brought two hundred and fifty dozen; which had been sent out a few months before wrote Bayard Taylor in 1850, while " another from the Sandwich Islands [Hawaii] brought one hundred dozen, and the practice was becoming general."

Sending your shirts to a Chinese laundry that was actually in China may have been something to write home about, but it was no answer to the dirty clothes problem. By mid-1849, Mexican and Indian women were washing clothes out by the Presidio along the Fresh Pond, which soon became known as Washerwoman's Lagoon. They were doing so well that several dozen men set up laundries there too. Washing clothes may not have been traditionally a man's job, but it paid two or three times as much as pushing a wheelbarrow or unloading ships' cargoes.

The washerwomen settled on one edge of the lagoon, and the washermen took over the other side. The men "went into the business on a large scale, having their tents for ironing, their large kettles for boiling the clothes, and their fluted washboards along the edge of the water," wrote the ever-curious Bayard Taylor. "It was an amusing sight to see a great, burly, long-bearded fellow kneeling on the ground, with sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and rubbing a shirt on the board with such violence that the suds flew and the buttons, if there were any, must soon snap off. Their clearstarching and ironing were still more ludicrous, but, notwithstanding, they succeeded fully as well as the women, and were rapidly growing rich from the profits of their business."

There were, especially in a business where blind-luck played such an important role, emotional needs among the discouraged and unfortunate miners. For each that uncovered the vast wealth and prospered, there were many whose luck had run out. Often these need were filled by the generousness of the other miners. Charles Shinn describes one such situation.

In the first years, then, the foot-hills were chiefly filled with young men from decent homes somewhere on the other side of the Missouri reiver, their instincts leading them to treat their fellows honestly and straightforwardly, to form in groups whenever possible, to arrange their conduct, as soon as they could, in an approximation of the pattern to which they were accustomed. The sense of responsibility to which they had been brought up led them to deprecate crookedness, to assume that the stranger was an honest man until he proved himself otherwise, to help the down-and-outer when they had the chance. Charles Shinn, in his recollections of the mining camps, tells a characteristic tale of this willingness to aid a fellow creature who had been unlucky, a story of a young fellow who wandered dejectedly into a camp where some thirty fortunate miners were busy on their claims. He explained, when they asked him, that he had been unable to locate a claim where there was any gold, and that he was through. Whereupon one of the miners mad his proposition. "Boys," he said, "I'll work an hour for that chap yonder if you will." The rest agreed, and at the end of the hour they turned over to the young man something like a hundred dollars in gold dust. They then made up a list of tools and told the boy, "Now go and buy these tools and come back here. We'll stake out a good claim for you, and after that you'll paddle your own canoe!"

Death also brought its own needs and sometimes western humor. Frank Marryat wrote about a miner's burial service and how it could even get in the way of the search for gold.

Not that the honest miner was any plaster saint, either. Death was no stranger to him; he had seen plenty of it on his journey to this new California, no matter how he came; he met such matters with a rough humor, and thoroughgoing sense of the practical.

Frank Marryat, in "Mountains and Molehills" is authority for the frequently repeated yarn of the burial service that turned into a miniature gold-rush before the service was so much as read. The incident took place in the southern mines, somewhere near the banks of Carson Creek, where a miner died and his companions decided to give him the real thing in funerals:

" A miner of the neighborhood, who had the reputation of having been a prominent and powerful preacher in the eastern states, was called upon to officiate; and he consented to do so. After assembling and taking "drinks all around," the party proceeded with becoming gravity to the grave, which had been dug at a distance of about a hundred yards from the camp. When the spot was reached and the body lowered, the minister commenced an extempore prayer, while the crowd reverently fell upon their knees. For a while, all went well; but the prayer was unnecessarily long and at last some of the congregation began, in an abstracted way to finger the loose earth that had been thrown up from the grave. It proved to be thick with gold, and an excitement was immediately apparent in the kneeling crowd. Upon this the preacher stopped and inquiringly asked, "Boys, what's that?" took a view of the ground for himself and, as he did so, shouted "Gold! Gold! -- and the richest kind of diggings! The congregation is dismissed!" The dead miner was taken from his auriferous grave to be buried elsewhere, while the funeral party, with the minister at their head, lost no time in prospecting and staking out new diggings!"

But, how to pay for these supplies and services? In a society that was lacking in coins, how did they pay the bill at the hardware store, at the rustic laundry; how to pay for the liquor, the food, and all the provisions needed for prospecting and mining?

Coins were scarce so the miner was forced to pay with gold dust, or gold nuggets, but not only did the price of gold fluctuate from one area to the next, but the quality of the gold dust also varied by district. George Tinkham recalled the problems of attempting to conduct commerce.

"Coins of any kind or denomination were very scarce. Those fortunate enough to possess coin could obtain twice its face value in

gold dust. In 1849 gold was so plentiful that everybody had his pockets full of dust.

Every bank and every merchant had his gold scales sitting upon the counter, and the merchant weighed the gold by the ounce or measured it by the quantity in payment for goods. Its value was changeable. An ounce of gold in San Francisco was worth twice what it was in the mines. A big pinch of gold in the mines was called \$16. Its actual value in San Francisco was \$24. In September 1848, the San Francisco merchants agreed to call an ounce of gold \$18."

" The California Chronicle and the S.F. Picayune summarized some of the problems, "The fluctuations in the price of gold, varying from \$10 in 1849 to \$17 in 1851, was long ignored by traders, and this neglect, together with the prevailing liberal disregard for a pinch more or less in disbursements, favored many tricks and frauds. Admixtures of black sand, etc, were common; spelter and packages with spurious dust and coin were passed. Gold from low-grade districts was transferred to others for admixture with higher qualities. The gold from central California was mostly virgin gold; but that which was later thrown upon the market from the mines of Mariposa, Kern River and Fresno was of inferior quality. Scales were tampered with, weights were made light, pans were waxed to seize the gold. Although gold-dust passed as currency, the demand for stamped coin became so imperative for custom-house payments and general convenience, that several private establishments began to coin money. "

Who were these enterprising individuals who stepped forward to stamp the first coins, and thus solve the problems of commerce? The self-sufficient population soon was attempting to make coins.

"The "Utah Early Records" had this to say: On the 13th [of November, 1848] fifteen Battalion men arrived from California. During the month several other small companies arrived. Some of them brought considerable gold dust with the. [on the 19th of November, 1848] preparation was made to make coin of the gold dust brought from California."

Who were the individuals that produced the first pioneer coin,

perhaps we will never know their identity. My search is limited to discovering who the men were that coined the Norris, Grieg, & Norris coins of 1849 and 1850. This much is known and probably well accepted in the numismatic community. Although the name of one of the partners has been spelled Grieg, Grigg, and Griegg, it is well documented that Thomas Norris, Hiram Norris, and Charles Griegg were in the manufacturing business in iron pipes, tubular boilers, and fittings of several kinds in the late 1840's in New York.

Evidently one, or more, of these partners found his way to Benicia in 1849 where the coins of 1849 were produced; although the mystery remains of why the coins were stamped San Francisco. It appears that by the spring of 1850, they had moved their operation to Stockton, California. One coin with the name of Stockton and with the date of 1850 is in existence at this time. The author has determined that in the spring of 1850 Hiram Norris was in Stockton; he was defending the inherent value in the coins against public criticism.

At this point in the author's research the trail runs cold. It has not been discovered when the three coiners stopped production of the coins, nor has it been discovered where the three lived the rest of their lives.

The possible sources of information are many and varied. The archives at the University of Pacific in Stockton, the Stockton Public Library, and the Stockton Historical Society's are immediate sources of research information. The archives in New York City are still to be searched. A Norris family became influential businessmen in nearby Livermore, California in the 1850's; is there a connection here? The descendants of the Griegg and Norris families must have valuable information if the author can trace them to the present day.

Another possible trail is the path that George Ferdinand Albrecht Kuner left behind. It is known that Mr. Kuner came to the U.S. from Lindau, Bavaria in the latter part of 1848 at the age of 29; he arrived in San Francisco in July 16, 1849. In Edgar Adams' book, he states that by 1862, Kuner cut the dies for the 1862 Ten and Twenty Dollar pieces, dated 1862, for British Columbia. Is there information in the British Columbia archives in Victoria, B.C.?

Adams further wrote about earlier in Kuner's career:

"A. Reimers of San Francisco, another warm friend, states that Mr. Kuner told him that he had engraved the dies for the N.G.&N. Five Dollar piece, and that these men were Stockton merchants, who expected to use the coins at the mines in the lower part of the State; and we find that he made a memorandum in the book cited to that effect, but there must be some error, or this firm issued two different designs, judging by a paragraph taken from the "Alta California" of May 31, 1849, which was that a gold coin of Norris, Grieg & Norris, of the usual design, had just come to hand; and that, although it bore the name "San Francisco" it was nevertheless struck at the instance of the above-named firm, who were located at Benicia. This date, which must have been accurate, is several weeks before his arrival at San Francisco, on July 16, 1849. Of course it is possible that he cut the N.G.&N. dies before he got to that city." Another mystery to unravel.

The author has traced the descendents of George Kuner up to the year 1934 in San Francisco.

The author would be most appreciative if any reader would come forward with any information regarding the history of the coins. Suggestions about other sources of historical archives would also be appreciated. It would be most helpful if a reader knew of descendents of any of the people so far uncovered by the research. Who were they? Where did they go? The answers to the mystery are not apparent at this time; perhaps they will be after another five, or more, years of research.

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THERE'S NO SILVER LINING IN THEIR FORTUNES

By Lyn Landauer, Lake Tahoe Historical Society

As with many who have the vision and gumption to discover valuable mining properties, none of the men who discovered the Comstock Lode made much of a profit from it. Though the location of their claim was never established, the Grosch Brothers were the first to discover the lode. They died in tragic accidents before they could do much with their knowledge. McLaughlin and O'Riley, with their inadvertent partners, were the next discoverers of note. They set up the Ophir Mine, but did not own it long. Each sold their shares for a pittance of the eventual value of the lode.

Patrick McLaughlin, acknowledged to be the most honest and hard-working of his partners, lost all his money in a series of useless investments. He then became a \$40-a-month cook at the Green Mine in San Bernardino County in 1875. By that time, in 1879, nothing remained of the \$3,500 he received for his share of the Ophir Mine and he hadn't even enough money to avoid a pauper's burial.

Peter O'Riley wasted his money on absurd speculations while he continued prospecting. He lost the money, but went on digging for gold in the mountains with visions of great wealth just ahead. After two or three years of digging a tunnel which the spirits had told him to do because a mountain of gold and silver lay ahead, he endured cave-ins and deprivations. When he was injured and taken to a hospital, the doctors who treated him judged him insane. He died in an asylum in Woodbridge, California.

Henry Comstock took all he could get from his purloined share, invested in a supply business with stores in Carson City and Silver City and bought a wife for a horse and \$60. His wife ran off with the first miner who came along, his business went broke, and he left the area for good. He went back to mining and drifted from camp to camp in Montana, finally committing suicide in 1870. His only legacy was that the whole area was called by his name.

James Finney was a drunk before he discovered the mine and continued to be afterward. He drank too much and squandered his money, glorying in the fact that the city was named for him. He sold small parts of his mine for good and drink. One day when he was very drunk he went riding on an Indian pony and was thrown off. His foot caught in the stirrup, he was dragged for some distance and his skull fractured. This was only a few years after the discovery. He was buried in Dayton in June of 1861.

THERE'S NO SILVER LINING IN THEIR FORTUNES (continued...)

The later owners and partners who had prospected the area did not do well either. It was the bankers and other investors who made out well in the Comstock. There may be a lesson in all this. The men who search for and discover a gold mine, a silver mine, or a diamond mine, are not the kind of men who visualize what that discovery can become in the future or make it happen. These early adventurers would not have had the vision or capital to pursue the lode into the depths of the mountain. Nor could they have afforded the equipment and machinery necessary, the stamping plants or the water conduits that were needed to continue to work in the searing heat and at the tremendous depths that mining was done. They are interested in the hunt, not in the fruits of their labor, beyond how much drink and how many girls it can buy. That is why not one of them hung onto any of the money he earned from the strike. That they discovered a bonanza was the only important reality.



'BLASTED BLUE STUFF' COVERS HILLS

By Lyn Landauer, a member of the Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Nevada strikes it rich with the Comstock Lode in 1859

Two fascinating facts illuminate the discovery of silver in Nevada. The first is that the prospectors who found it were not looking for silver; in fact, the ore in which silver was embedded was thrown away at first. The second fact is that silver was discovered in at least three different places on the same silver deposit by three different groups of prospectors and the entire lode was named after a man who was not one of them.

It started with a gold strike in the hills of the western Utah Territory, now Nevada. Gold was discovered there as early as 1851 by a man named Henry Perouse, who had prospected in California the previous year and came east to see what he could find. Located in the mountains east of the Sierra Nevada, the strike was not large, but it was enough to produce a meager living for a few miners. The area was not crowded with prospectors in the 1850s, but from this modest gold strike a community of prospectors grew up at Gold Canyon – today called Gold Hill.

Over the next few years, thriving town grew, made up of miners who had struck out in California, lost their claims, and were heading home or just wandering around the West and stopped to pick up a few nuggets. Even though gold pickings were good, they were not spectacular and were in decline by 1857. Still prospectors continued to scramble out a meager living from their claims in the area.

By 1859, three different groups of miners were working on opposite sides of the mountain when each found something unusual and promising. The first discovery was made by Allen and Hosea Grosch, brothers who were decidedly different from ordinary miners. They had arrived in 1853 to prospect for gold and proceeded to make a study of mining. There were rumors in the area that they had found something of interest in 1859, but the brothers were careful miners and close-mouthed. No one knew exactly where their claim was. It is now fairly certain that what they found was silver, but they kept it quiet. Their claim may have been in Silver City, but no one is sure. They told no one. Allen took a sample to be assayed in Nevada City in California. Before he could return, he died from an injury he suffered in an accident. His brother went after him and died of gangrene and frostbite only four months later. Before they could make any profit from their discovery or tell anyone where it was, they were dead.

The acknowledged first discoverers of record of this silver lode were two gold miners cking out a living in Six-Mile Canyon. Pat McLaughlin and Peter O'Riley were working in the Gold Hill area. In spite of the fact that many had already left because of the dark sand, McLaughlin and O'Riley stuck it out. One day as they tried to increase the water flow to their claim by opening the area around a stream, they found more gold on a kind of ledge. It was pale gold and dark blue sand, but they persisted.

'BLASTED BLUE STUFF' COVERS HILLS (continued)....

Then along came Henry Comstock, who saw the gold cache they were amassing, and talked them out of part of their mine. The Ophir Mine became a partnership of four men, including a friend of Comstock's named Penrod. The first discovery at Comstock began a rush to the area. Many of them were miners from California who had arrived with the Gold Rush and had been less than successful in their quest for gold.

James "Old Virginny" Finney had been working in the canyon since 1851 and was a so-called local expert on mining. He was also a drunk and a storyteller. On Feb. 22, 1858, he saw a vein that he fancied on the slope of Sun Peak. He put his name on a piece of paper and secured it there with a stone. He never dug there or developed it in any way, but his claim was recognized and called the Virginia Lead. He enlisted a few partners, Bishop, Henderson and Yount, who prospected the slopes of Sun Peak. Old Virginny was fortunate that his partners were more energetic than he was. They set to work and shoveled out panfuls of enough glitter to stake the claim with Virginny.

Each group of men, and a number of others, found dark iron-like sand that they threw away. "They cursed that blasted blue stuff from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof," wrote Dan de Quille in 1876. When samples were taken to Grass Valley to be assayed, the secret of the silver strike was out and it became common knowledge that it was a very rich silver lode. New, inexperienced miners joined the old-timers in the area. After a time, working at opposite sides of the mountain, they realized that they were all working at the edges of the same lode. This lode of silver ran from the slopes of Mt. Davidson in the north down through Gold Canyon to the Carson River around Dayton. Few mines went much deeper than 1,500 feet because of the excess heat and lack of air and water at those depths. This bonanza is always called the Comstock Lode now. In the latter part of the 1800s, writers called it the Comstock Lodge, the Comstock Lead and some jokingly called it the Comstock Load.

By spring of 1860, a massive wave of humanity rushed toward the western hills of Nevada in the opposite direction from the Gold Rush. They headed east by wagon, mule, horseback and shank's mare (by foot) many pushing wheel barrows, until it was clear that Californians would be involved in all phases of life in the silver mines. Many observers remarked that California had drawn the elite from the whole world and Nevada drew the best from California.

MINING CAMPS WERE NO PICNIC

By Rick Chandler

Ralph Shock was one of those who struck it rich in the gold mining settlement of Jamestown – but his good fortune came a little later than most. Shock, you see, he didn't arrive in the area until 1975. But if it had not been for him, a large portion of California's Gold Rush history would still be buried in the foothills west of Yosemite National Park – a fascinating window into the daily lives of prospectors and merchants who populated the mining camps throughout the Sierra Nevada.

“My father had gone bankrupt in the auto business, and he moved out here to get away from it all and find a new beginning,” said Bryant Shock, Ralph's son and co-owner of the Jimtown 1849 Gold Mining Camp. Ralph Shock passed away last year. “His idea was to start marketing the gold business, and he began taking groups out on prospecting trips all over the area”.

It was during one of these trips, in the fall of 1990, that Shock made a discovery of a different kind. Due to a lack of precipitation that year, gold was hard to come by – so the prospectors were digging deeper than usual. Suddenly, in a spot near Woods Creek, Shock and his party began uncovering all kinds of artifacts: a rusted pistol that was still loaded, a knife, lanterns, a gold pan, a tin box wrapped in oil cloth and many other things.

After uncovering the foundation of an old cabin, Shock began researching the area in earnest. What he discovered was a rich vein of history that would lead to the formation of Jimtown – an interactive gold mining camp that is enjoyed by thousands of visitors each year.

“It's one thing to read about the Gold Rush in books, but it's quite another to actually get out and enjoy a hands-on experience,” said Bryant Shock, who began co-operating the site with his father soon after its discovery. In addition to the buildings and artifacts found on the premises, the Shocks also brought in other authentic relics of life in Gold Rush times – transforming Jimtown into a real-life “diggings”.

“My father wanted to preserve this history for future generations,” said Shock, who himself was in the auto business until his dad “found the elephant”.

“He located some old tent patterns dating back to 1833, finding that the same company that made them was still in business. So he made authentic tents from the Gold Rush era. He then began locating old gold mining equipment, and brought in many other items. The result is a comprehensive experience that brings the Gold Rush to life in one spot.”

Shock found out that Mark Twain once lived in a cabin in the area, and rebuilt it on an old foundation he thought was in the approximate spot. Soon there will be a working replica of Sutter's Mill, complete with reenactments of James Marshall's gold discovery.

And every year, approximately 15,000 school children visit Jimtown on educational field trips – a program Bryant Shock began in 1991.

MINING CAMPS WERE NO PICNIC (continued)

The Gold Rush in this portion of the Sierra Nevada was touched off in June 1848, when Benjamin Woods found a 75-pound gold nugget near the creek that now bears his name. “That creek was so rich that a man with a knife could scrape up \$200 worth of gold in a day,” Shock said. “It was only five months after the original gold discovery in Coloma, so gold was easy to find.” “People started pouring in,” he said. “Some came by ship, through San Francisco, but a lot of people simply walked. People don’t realize that back then if you were from Virginia or Ohio or Kentucky, the route of choice was overland. And that meant you walked most of the way.” But once in California, the 49ers found that life in a gold camp was primarily one of hardship and sickness. “A lot of folks died due to disease, and a lot got discouraged and left,” he said. “It was a hard life, and one was considered lucky if he made it through the first winter.”

The actual work of finding gold was a backbreaking proposition. In the early months of the Gold Rush, it was indeed possible to find gold with a minimum of effort – in some cases simply picking up nuggets near a streambed. But that soon played out, and 49ers then had to get down to real work to find any “color”. Among methods of finding gold were hydraulic mining, long toms or sluice boxes, hard rock mining and pocket hunting. It was tough, laborious work, sifting hundreds of pounds of material through sluices in the river, or digging through dirt and rock to find veins in the hills. The image of the gold panner casually squatting on a riverbank and finding enough gold to get rich was essentially a false one.

“Prospectors used gold pans to locate gold, but what was just the first step,” Shock said. “You have to move a lot of rocks and gravel to find gold.” In substantial amounts, that is. Visitors to Jimtown are allowed to pan for as much gold as they want – there is no limit to what gold they can take out. “It is estimated that only about 17 percent of the gold was removed during the Gold Rush,” Shock said. “Most of it is still there, in veins. It’s just hard to find, and hard to get at.”

Life in a mining camp in the early 1850s is nothing that can be faithfully recreated, however. First of all, there were few women in such camps, and much lawlessness. It really was a different world ... the 49ers still referred to their homes back East as “the states”, even after California received statehood in 1850. Mostly, life in a camp was work from dawn until dusk. There were a few bars, restaurants and even hotels in camps such as Jamestown, Chinese Camp and Coloma, but these were usually nothing more than large tents with dirt floors that could be taken down at a moment’s notice. “Everything had to be mobile,” Shock said. “If another, bigger strike was discovered, those people were gone. You had to be able to take down your tent, grab your belongings and run.”

What justice there was usually ran to the vigilante variety – it’s how Hangtown, now Placerville, got its name – and entertainment was sparse. If there are gold seekers still looming in the hills, Jamestown is located west of Sonora off of State Route 120.

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

By Daniel Bacon

Ambling along San Francisco's Barbary Coast Trail, you arrive at a weathered brick building. Directly beneath this site, a gold rush-era ship lies entombed in the landfill. Equally interesting is the faded sign on the building's east face. It reads "Old Ship Saloon—H. Klee Prop." Klee owned the place from 1897 to 1912. He was one of the last of the men on San Francisco's notorious Barbary Coast waterfront to be called a "shanghaier," a pre-political correctness term for kidnappers who sent sailors to sea involuntarily.

In its heyday, the Barbary Coast was a busy maritime district. By evening, it transformed into a seductive siren, luring sailors and slummers into a dangerous milieu of opium dens, grog shops, brothels, and gambling houses.

Most cities are strewn with tantalizing clues to their heritage. But often these elusive gems lie tucked away in obscure alleys and little-known nooks. The challenge is to ferret them out. And there is no better way than to lace up your walking shoes and head out on the byways. The 1990s have seen an explosion of heritage travel—visitors who seek to experience an area's past. To accommodate this army of explorers, many cities have created urban trails that guide walkers back to the streets of old San Francisco, or old New York, or Boston, Chicago, and others (see sidebar).

San Francisco first captured the world's attention as the gateway to the gold rush and again when it was nearly destroyed in the earthquake and fire of 1906. Like many cities, though, San Francisco's colorful past is hidden under a 20th-century facade. Four years ago, the San Francisco Historical Society set out to correct this cultural vacuum. The result is the Barbary Coast Trail, a 3.8-mile walk (mostly flat or gently sloping) and 20-minute cable car ride through the heart of historic San Francisco.

From the center of downtown to scenic Aquatic Park, the trail explores areas where the gold rush brought the Wild West and Far East together for the first time. A series of bronze medallions, emblazoned with a miner ship, marks the path at every street corner. The trail connects 20 historic sites, including the oldest Asian temple in North America, the Pony Express, a Barbary

Coast saloon, a Bonanza King mansion, a beat poet hangout, and the largest collection of historic ships in the United States. In addition, six local history museums—all free of charge—dot the trail.

The first stop on the Barbary Coast Trail is the Old U.S. Mint. Built in 1874, the “Granite Lady” is a legacy of San Francisco’s silver age. When mining engineers struck the Big Bonanza—billions of dollar’s worth of silver ore in Nevada’s Comstock Lode—the federal government decided to construct a grand new mint in San Francisco. At one time, the Granite Lady held a third of all U.S. gold reserves, making it the “Fort Knox of the West.” During the 1906 fire, a group of mint workers and soldiers locked themselves inside as 2,700-degree flames outside melted the mint’s windows. For seven heroic hours, the men fought the blaze. Their valiant stand saved the building and the \$200 million in gold in its vaults.

A 10-minute walk from the Old Mint leads to Union Square, center of San Francisco’s shopping and hotel district. During the Civil War, the square served as a stage for Unitarian minister Thomas Starr King, whose passionate oratory inspired Californians’ donations to the Sanitary Fun (forerunner to the Red Cross) for the care of wounded on both sides of the battle.

In the center of Union Square a goddesslike statue holds a trident and palm wreath. Erected in 1903 to honor Admiral Dewey’s victory at the battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War of 1898, the statue is also known for its rags-to-riches story. A poor young art student named Alma de Brettville, who posed in the nude for art classes to pay her tuition, modeled for the bronze figure. Once erected, the statue—which portrayed Alma in a diaphanous gown and accentuated her hourglass figure—created quite a stir. Alma attracted the attention of sugar magnate Adolph Spreckles, and eventually she married the middle-aged millionaire. From then on, Alma became San Francisco’s *grande dame*. With Adolph’s money she built several museums, including the California Palace of the Legion of Honor.

In the 1800s, Union Square was surrounded by Gothic churches and exclusive social clubs, so it’s surprising to learn the history of its neighbor, Maiden Lane. Gated and generally closed to traffic, Maiden Lane today is a pleasant oasis of small shops and savory bistros. On warm days, restaurants set tables and chairs in the street for alfresco dining. This Europeanlike ambiance, however, belies Maiden Lane’s wicked history. Before the 1906

fire scorched its sinful ways, Maiden Lane was an infamous crib alley, lined with wooden shanties where prostitutes often hung out of windows to solicit customers.

Maiden Lane leads to Grant Avenue, San Francisco's oldest Street. Grant is an avenue with a personality that murates wildly as it crosses from one neighborhood to another. At Bush Street, a triple-portal gate, guarded by a pair of fierce-looking Fu dog statues, straddles the road as Grant leaves the world of couture to enter North America's oldest Chinatown. With roots dating back to the gold rush, Chinatown was an almost hermetically sealed neighborhood, isolated by outside prejudices and a desire to maintain familial ties with the Middle Kingdom. Today, it's a neighborhood with two personalities. Most tourists stay on Grant Avenue, where they are hustled with exotic bargains and corny T-shirts, but the Barbary Coast Trail winds onto narrow backstreets where the smell of incense and the clacking sound of mahjong tiles indicate a community still practicing time-honored traditions.

A few steps from Grant Avenue at Waverly Place, the sound of brass gong reverberates out onto the street. Waverly is an eye-catching, two-block lane often referred to as the "street of the painted balconies." Look up to see a colorful collage of painted porches and overhanging cornices in green, yellow, red, and gold. In the 1800s, Waverly was the site of bloody tong war battles between rival Chinese groups vying for control of lucrative opium and gambling operations.

Down Waverly, tendrils of incense emanate from the balcony of Tin Hou Temple, a Taoist place of worship and the oldest Asian temple in North America. The walk up a narrow stairway into the temple is well worth the effort. Inside, multicolored tassels dangle from the ceiling and an antique red-and-gold altar cradles the statue of Hou. Queen of the Heavens and Goddess of the Seven Seas. A stern, elderly Chinese matron in a black silk blouse offers you a scroll that tells the story of her goddess.

At the edge of Chinatown, the trail enters Portsmouth Square, San Francisco's oldest public square and the birthplace of the village of Yerba Buena—San Francisco's original name. As you look at the high-rises and brick Edwardians hovering around, it's difficult to imagine the sleepy trading port established here in 1835 by English sailor William Richardson. Only a block away from the original shoreline, the port village facilitated

trade between vast Mexican ranches spread across the Bay Area and visiting ship. Yerba Buena prospered and grew at a plodding pace until January of 1848, when the discovery of gold changed everything.

Surprisingly, rumors of gold floating down from the Sierra foothills were ridiculed as hype. It wasn't until mid-May when Sam Brannan made his famous cry of "Gold!" in Portsmouth Square that San Franciscans were jogged from their disbelief. His call ignited a fever in nearly all 900 residents, many of whom raced up to the mother lode, beginning the world-famous California gold rush.

What San Francisco didn't know was that before Brannan made his announcement, he had stocked up his hardware store in Sacramento with picks, shovels, rockers, and mining pans. Brannan also published a newspaper in San Francisco, which he sent back East to spread the news. With his flair for the dramatic, Brannan inspired a rush that would bring hundreds of ships and thousands of gold seekers on an epic journey to the new El Dorado.

In this area, the Chinese Historical Society Museum's exhibits start with the conditions in China that motivated emigration to the United States in the 1800s and go on to detail the Chinese contribution to the development of California. The city's best gold rush museum is the nearby Wells Fargo History Museum. Gold nuggets, stage coaches, and displays on pioneer women and the escapades of outlaws paint an exciting portrait of the Old West.

Following the city's original shoreline, the trail enters the Jackson Square Historic District. This four-square-block area encompasses the last cluster gold rush—era buildings left in the city. Lines with Victorian lampposts and restored brick buildings, it imparts a sense of what it was like to walk down a 19th-century San Francisco street. The third building, at 730 Montgomery, served as the offices of a literary monthly called the *Golden Era*. Over the decades, the publication attracted a who's who of early California writers including Mark Twain, Ina Coolbrith, and Joaquin Miller. At a nearby saloon, Twain made the acquaintance of a San Francisco fireman. The two became fast friends, and when Twain moved back to the Midwest he never forgot his fireman friend from San Francisco. How do we know? The fireman's name was Tom Sawyer.

Around the corner on Jackson Street, you'll find three magnificent Italianate buildings built by whiskey distributor Anson Hotaling in the 1860s. The heavy pediments over the arched windows and ornate iron pilasters at the ground floor are comparable in style to the stonework of French chateaus and Italian villas. In the 1960s, antiques dealers renovated the buildings into swank shops.

Was it blind luck or divine intervention that saved the Jackson Square Historic District from the 1906 earthquake and fire? Newspaper editors in other parts of the country claimed the disaster was God's way of punishing San Francisco for its hedonistic ways. This prompted one local wag to write:

*If, as they say, God spanked the town
For being over-frisky,
Why did He burn the churches down
And spare Hotaling's whiskey?*

The next street over from Jackson is Pacific Avenue, the heart of the old Barbary Coast. Buried under a brick bar and grill at Pacific and Battery streets lies the carcass of a three-masted gold rush ship called the *Arkansas*. After running aground on Alcatraz Island in 1849, the ship was towed onto the beach and converted into a saloon by Joe Anthony, an enterprising Englishman. Anthony cut doors and windows in the side of the forecastle, ran a gangplank to the Pacific street pier, and placed a sign over the door reading "Old Ship Ale House—Gud, bad and Indif'rent Spirits Sold. Here! At 25 cents each."

By 1859, bay waters around the ship had been filled in and the aboveground portion of the ship was dismantled. In its place was constructed a brick hotel with a bar on the ground floor called the Old Ship Saloon, which operated as a sailor's saloon and shanghaiing den into the 20th century. Here is where you'll find the faded sign that reads, "Old Ship Saloon," H. Klee Prop."

At this point you may find the tour has stimulated not only your curiosity but also your appetite. Fortunately, two of the world's finest cuisines—Chinese and Italian—abound. The aroma of stir-fried shrimp scents the air on one block, garlic and Parmesan cheese on the next. Just follow your nose—it's hard to go wrong.

From Pacific Avenue the trail turns left up Columbus Avenue into North Beach, the heart of beat and Italian San Francisco. The walls of Vesuvio Café are a shrine of notes, articles, and photos on the beat poets and writers—Kerouac, Ginsberg, Cassady, and Ferlinghetti—who once congregated there. In the late 1950s, when the beat craze brought eager wannabes from around the country, owner Henri Lenoir placed a mannequin in the window dressed in sandals, beret, and sunglasses. Next to it he placed a sign: “Beatnik Kit \$5.00.”

Farther up Columbus, the heart of North Beach beats at Washington Square Park. Across from the square, Fior d’Italia claims to be the oldest Italian restaurant in the country. After the 1906 fire left 250,000 homeless, the restaurant set up a soup kitchen to feed refugees who were camped in tents erected in the square.,

A block from Washington Square, the Barbary Coast Trail reconnects with Grant Avenue—now a sedate street of well-preserved Edwardian-style flats. Near Francisco Street, a stairway leads 63 steps up to Jack Early Park, a tiny knoll with an exhilarating view. Starting east at the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, the panorama spans more than 180 degrees across the bay to the Golden Gate Bridge. From here, you can readily see how the sun’s radiance over the harbor entrance inspired John C. Fremont to prophetically name it the Golden Gate, two years before the discovery of gold.

Down a set of stairs to Kearny Street, the trail heads north and connects with the Embarcadero, once the center of San Francisco’s great port and now a palm tree—lined boulevard. Past Pier 39 and Fisherman’s Wharf, the trail ends at scenic Aquatic Park, a sandy cove and walking promenade. Here the masts of the square-rigger *Balclutha* rise above the bay, evoking an era when California’s golden wheat harvest was shipped around the tip of the South America to Europe.

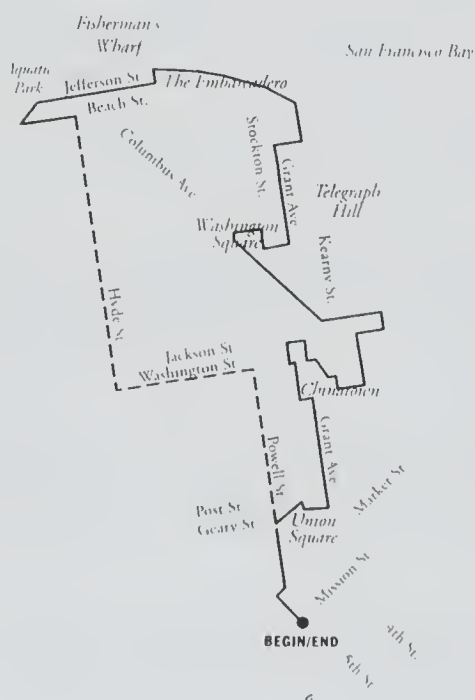
At the edge of the cove, the San Francisco National Maritime Museum resembles a beached ocean liner. Built in 1939, its circular sidewalls, tiered upper floors, and porthole windows are immediately recognizable as the upper decks of a 1930s-era cruise ship. Inside, clipper ship figureheads and intricately detailed ship models celebrate San Francisco’s maritime heritage.

From Aquatic Park, the Powell-Hyde cable car line journeys back to downtown and the beginning of the Barbary Coast Trail. The 19th-century

cable contraptions climb up the steepest section of Hyde Street. Just as you begin to feel queasy, a sparking view of the bay diverts your attention from the dizzying climb.

On the cable car ride back, let your mind drift over the walk you've just taken. Shanghaier mingle with gold rush miners, Barbary Coast jazz musicians jam with beat poets, Chinese herb doctors attend to Italian fishermen. Suddenly, San Francisco is more than a collection of restaurants and stores, streets and parks. Every landmark tells a story, and every story is an episode in a history that reads like an epic novel. And like the lingering legends, so many of the physical components of San Francisco's past area all there, remarkably real and immediate, along the Barbary Coast Trail.

The Barbary Coast Trail



HARRY BASS, JR, COLLECTION of CALIFORNIA SMALL DENOMINATION GOLD

by
Jack Totheroh, S.P.P.N. #5

The Harry Bass, Jr. Collection of California Small Denomination Gold was auctioned by Bowers-Merena on May 9, 1999. There were 436 lots comprising 295 varieties. This was the largest Auction of California Small Denomination Gold since the Texas Collection (Mike Brownlee) was offered by Bowers-Merena, January 10, 1992. The Brownlee Collection was the finest ever offered, equalling the Lee Collection in rarities and exceeding it in varieties with 467 varieties out of 468 lots. There are presently 568 known varieties. The Rob Edmunds Collection auctioned by Superior, January 29, 1996 should also be mentioned. While it did not have the number of coins, 293, there were 268 varieties which nearly equalled that of the Bass Collection.

If the rare and high grade varieties alone are considered, the Bass Auction brought high prices. The unique round quarter of Frontier-Deviercy, B.G.224A, and the unique B.G.932X brought \$8625 and \$3175 respectively. (See Auction Sales History for descriptions and comments)

There was a total of fifteen varieties which reached all time highs:

| | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|--------|-----------|------|------|--------|
| B.G. 204 | UR 8 '63' | \$ 748 | B.G. 224A | UR10 | '58' | \$8625 |
| B.G. 513 | UR 9 '40' | \$9775 | B.G. 523 | UR 6 | '63' | \$1495 |
| B.G. 528 | UR 7 '60' | \$1783 | B.G. 799 | UR 8 | '64' | \$2530 |
| B.G. 602 | UR 7 '50' | \$7475 | B.G. 806 | UR 5 | '65' | \$1380 |
| B.G. 837 | UR 8 '63' | \$1150 | B.G. 856 | UR 8 | '62' | \$1150 |
| B.G. 882 | UR 8 '64' | \$1150 | B.G. 932X | UR10 | '60' | \$3175 |
| B.G.1003 | UR 7 '63' | \$ 690 | B.G.1105 | UR 6 | '64' | \$1035 |
| B.G.1120 | UR 6 '64' | \$2415 | | | | |

The octagonal dollar by Frontier-Deviercy for G.L. received the highest bid of \$9775. It was graded '40'. Bill O'Connor's coin is an uncirculated '60'.

But!! varieties of lower rarity rating and/or grading received successful bids which fell below the mean of the past five years of Auction History File records. As an example, see the highly popular Frontier-Deviercy octagonal half-dollar with an eagle on the reverse, B.G.302 which, with a '63 grading, reached only the 44th ranking of prices realized in the History File. There were two other specimens offered, both graded '60', which received bids of \$633 and \$518. It would seem to indicate that we have a small select society of Cal Gold collectors (probably less than 75). When the demand for the group has been met prices drop from lack of strong bids. Professional Coin Grading Services has certified over sixty B.G.302s and the Breen-Gillio rarity rating is now 4 with the Universal Rarity rating at 5. This was a time to acquire 'common' varieties at reasonable prices. I hope some of you did.

CALIFORNIA SMALL DENOMINATION GOLDAuction Sales History

BG #302

1853

FRONTIER-DEVIERY OCTAGONAL HALF-DOLLAR RARITY UR-5

DESCRIPTION

Obv: Same Liberty head as B.G.301. 13 stars, tip of bust points to 1st star, tip of coronet points to 7th star; F.D. to right of nape of neck; 1853 below bust.

Rev: Eagle clasping an arrow; rays above and in back of head; CALIFORNIA GOLD. above and 50 CENTS. below.

On die state 2 there is an obverse cud break at the 12th star. On die state 3 the break obliterates the star.

NOTES

This has been erroneously described as a peacock, but with all of the San Francisco fires it may have been a phoenix. San Francisco adopted a phoenix on its government seal. See Brasher Bulletin, Vol.9, #2, pp.7-10, by Jack Tothoroh. Three or more were found at the Winfield Scott

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>AUCTION HOUSE</u> | <u>COLLECTION</u> | <u>LOT #</u> | <u>DIE ST.</u> | <u>GRADE</u> | <u>PRICE</u> | <u>X-REF</u> |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 05-10-80 | KRUEGER | Grafton | 520 | | 65 | \$4,000 | |
| 11-15-80 | NERCA | David K. Carnegie | 1639 | | 60 | \$3,850 | |
| 07-26-80 | NERCA | Boston Jubilee | 1638 | | 60 | \$2,860 | |
| 08-02-80 | KRUEGER | Chataway Bay | 1039 | | 60 | \$2,500 | |
| 07-26-80 | NERCA | Boston Jubilee | 1639 | | 63 | \$2,310 | |
| 10-08-91 | SUPERIOR | Kuntz | 2970 | | 63 | \$2,200 | 1 |
| 08-20-83 | KAGIN | A.N.A. | 3745 | | 60 | \$1,760 | |
| 06-14-81 | KRUEGER | Garden State | 1211 | | 40 | \$1,750 | |
| 02-01-94 | SUPERIOR | Rothenberger | 2802 | | 64 | \$1,705 | |
| 05-06-98 | STACKS | Public Auction | 1320 | 1 | 63 | \$1,650 | |
| 06-02-98 | SUPERIOR | June Auction | 2008 | | 64 | \$1,595 | |
| 05-31-93 | SUPERIOR | May-June Auction | 1814 | | 63 | \$1,595 | |
| 04-10-81 | NERCA | New York | 1522 | | 60 | \$1,430 | |
| 08-07-98 | HERITAGE | Portland, A.N.A. | 7966 | 2 | 61 | \$1,380 | |
| 02-01-87 | HERITAGE | FPL | | | 65 | \$1,350 | |
| 10-01-89 | SUPERIOR | Heifetz | 34 | 1 | 63 | \$1,320 | |
| 02-18-97 | SUPERIOR | Gainsborough II | 2404 | 1 | 64 | \$1,265 | |
| 09-25-88 | SUPERIOR | Lee | 43 | | 60 | \$1,265 | 1 |
| 10-01-89 | SUPERIOR | Heifetz | 35 | 1 | 63 | \$1,210 | |
| 11-01-85 | BOWERS & MERENA | Kosoff | 938 | | 63 | \$1,210 | |
| 01-06-95 | BOWERS & MERENA | Perry | 3127 | 1 | 61 | \$1,210 | |
| 03-30-90 | BOWERS & MERENA | Brand-3 | 1712 | 1 | 63 | \$1,155 | |
| 09-22-87 | SUPERIOR | Cal-Neva | 4413 | | 63 | \$1,155 | |
| 10-18-90 | STACKS | 55th Anniversary | 1997 | 1 | 60 | \$1,155 | |
| 09-23-83 | PCAG | N.C.N.A., S.F. | 1249 | 1 | 55 | \$1,155 | |

X-REF indicates multiple sales of the same coin. A missing duplicate pair number indicates other sale achieved price of less than top 25 prices realized

Data compiled by R J TOTTEROH. Care has been taken, however accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

CALIFORNIA SMALL DENOMINATION GOLD

Auction Sales History

BG #2 2 4 A 1853 NOUIZILLET ROUND QUARTER RARITY UR- 10

DESCRIPTION

Obv: 12 stars; 1st star touches point of bust; point of coronet half-way between 5th and 6th stars. (Same as B.G. 224)
 Rev: 8 berries on each wreath. Wreath stems are shorter and not curved as on B.G. 224 reverse. The A in DOLLAR is short and squat compared with the A in B.G. 224. The wreath is full and heavy. 1-4 DOLLAR within wreath.

NOTES

This variety had not been identified by Breen-Gillio. It was in the Bowers Ruddy - Newport Collection, graded '40' and sold for \$40. It remains unique.

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>AUCTION HOUSE</u> | <u>COLLECTION</u> | <u>LOT #</u> | <u>DIE ST.</u> | <u>GRADE</u> | <u>PRICE</u> | <u>X-REF</u> |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 05-09-99 | BOWERS & MERENA | Harry Bass, Jr. | 2577 | | 58 | \$8,625 | 1 |
| 01-31-75 | BOWERS & RUDDY | Newport Collection | 761 | | 40 | \$70.00 | 1 |

BG #5 1 3 1854 F.D. FOR G.L. OCTAGONAL DOLLAR RARITY UR-9

DESCRIPTION

Obv: 13 stars, 1st star to left and slightly above the point of the neck. Tip of the diadem just behind the 5th star. Same as B.G. 501
 Rev: CALIFORNIA GOLD. G.L. outside and around top of wreath; single bow knot on bottom of wreath. 5 stars below wreath, 3rd star between the two ties.

NOTES

Breen-Gillio says two coins: The Matt DeRoma, Doering coin and the Harry Bass one. Bill O'Connor has the De Roma- Doering coin, an unc. '60'. Mike Brownlee told him that Harry Bass did not have this coin. He was wrong, Harry did have the coin.

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>AUCTION HOUSE</u> | <u>COLLECTION</u> | <u>LOT #</u> | <u>DIE ST.</u> | <u>GRADE</u> | <u>PRICE</u> | <u>X-REF</u> |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 05-09-99 | BOWERS & MERENA | Harry Bass, Jr. | 2740 | | 40 | \$9,775 | |
| | | O'Connor | | | 60 | | |

BG #93 2 X 1876 CALIFORNIA OCTAGONAL HALF-DOLLAR RARITY UR- 10

DESCRIPTION

Obv: 13 'rosette' stars with the ends rounded as petals. The 6th star does not touch the point of the coronet whereas on B.G. 932 it does. The 8 of the date is closer to the 1 than on B.G. 932 and is further away from the 7.
 Rev: 1-2 DOLLAR CAL within a wreath. Same as B.G. 932

NOTES

This newly reported variety, Bowers-Merena, Harry Bass, Jr., 5-9-1999 poses the problem of number assignment. B.G. 932W has been assigned to what was formerly B.G. 864. It was identified by Heritage as a California Jewelry variety (not unknown maker). So, because of a different obverse than B.G. 932, this new variety has been assigned B.B. 932X.

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>AUCTION HOUSE</u> | <u>COLLECTION</u> | <u>LOT #</u> | <u>DIE ST.</u> | <u>GRADE</u> | <u>PRICE</u> | <u>X-REF</u> |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 05-09-99 | BOWERS & MERENA | Harry Bass, Jr. | 2662 | | 60 | \$3,175 | |

X-REF indicates multiple sales of the same coin. A missing duplicate pair number indicates other sale achieved price of less than top 25 prices realized.

Data compiled by R.J. TQTHEROH. Care has been taken, however accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

ROBERT B. GRAY, MANUFACTURING JEWELER

Today, Tommy Toy's Haute Cuisine Chinoise at 655 Montgomery Street extends west over 616 Merchant Street. From 1860 to 1871, Robert B. Gray & Co., importing and manufacturing jewelers, struck gold 25 and 50 cent and \$1 coins at this site on the north side of Merchant Street. Robert H. Lande has shown they circulated in gold-standard California during an era of depreciated greenbacks when silver half-dollars comprised small change.

More intriguing to me is the remark in Walter Breen and Ron J. Gillio's standard California Pioneer Fractional Gold (1983): "According to [Jay] Roe [in a 1980 brochure, "The Rarity of California Small Denomination Gold"], Gray's [25-cent] 'shield reverse' pieces are America's first sandwich metal coins: purer gold laminated on cores of native alloy (about 70% gold, 30% silver)." (p. 52). The first octagonal shield appeared in 1863, the last in 1869.

Simultaneously, the 1863 San Francisco City Directory placed Gray's "Electro Metallurgical Works" among other refining establishments. Its distinguishing feature was using a powerful battery in the process, but this experiment did not last a year. A faintly-written scrap of paper, rather than a printed billhead, charging the Guadalupe de Los Angeles Gold and Silver Mining Company of Mexico \$25 to refine ore illustrates the ephemeral nature of the business. Yet, electrolysis explains the nature of the sandwich coins. Robert Gray had the knowledge of chemistry, technology, and interest to produce innovative planchets.

Robert J. Chandler

San Francisco Feb 27th 1864
616 Merchant St.
To the Electro Metal, Co. Dr.
for refining one - \$25.00
Received Payment.
Wm H. Turner

THE
SAN FRANCISCO DIRECTORY

For the Year Commencing October, 1863:

COMPILED BY

HENRY G. LANGLEY,

EDITOR OF "STATE REGISTER" AND "STATE ALMANAC."

GENERAL REVIEW.

35

METALLURGICAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

With the constant discovery of new mines in the Washoe, Humbolt, and Reese River region, and the reclamation of old ones in Mexico, there is of course an increased demand for the best methods and most complete facilities for reducing and extracting the various samples of rock, produced from thousands of sources. In order to avail themselves of every facility and the improvements which are made every day in this department, the owners of these mines ship samples of their ore to this city for reduction and assay. There are four large Metallurgical establishments in this city, engaged in crushing and receiving samples of rock, from Reese River to Mexico, and which are kept constantly at work. We will enumerate them in the following order:

THE PACIFIC METALLURGICAL WORKS.

This pioneer establishment, which is located at the junction of Meiggs' Wharf and Francisco Street, North Beach, has been in successful operation for three years, during which time it has tested and developed the mineral wealth of many of the most valuable mines yet discovered. The capital stock is \$500,000, in five hundred shares of one hundred dollars each. The following are the officers of the Company: S. C. Hastings, President; M. S. Martin, D. C. Ferris, S. C. Bradshaw, Paul Torquet, W. A. Woodward, Directors; S. C. Bradshaw, Jr., Secretary; G. T. Fouque, Superintendent.

These works were erected upon European plans under the direction of Mr. Fouque, an able Metallurgist. Both wet and dry processes are used.

The machinery is propelled by a twenty-five-horse power engine, the vertical mill being used in crushing the ore—about five tons being worked per day; three amalgamators are in use, and extensive furnaces are used for roasting ores.

NORTH-BEACH QUARTZ MILL.

This mill, which has recently gone into operation, adjoins the Pacific Works on Francisco Street. It has also a twenty-five-horse power engine, which drives a battery of five stamps, crushing about six tons of rock each day. It is fitted up with two of Varney's Amalgamators, separating and reverberatory furnaces for roasting ores. Messrs. George Wheeler and Moses Thayer, are the proprietors.

SOUTH-PARK QUARTZ MILL.

This establishment is located at Steamboat Point, and has in use a thirty-horse power engine, with Bryant's Iron Battery, crushing about two and a half tons of ore each day. Six of Palmer and Hare's cast-iron steam pans are in use in the mill. J. W. Smith, Superintendent; S. F. Clouser, Secretary.

ELECTRO METALLURGICAL WORKS.

This Company, composed of Messrs. J. C. Griswold, L. A. Kelley, R. B. Gray, and B. R. Norton, have an establishment at No. 616 Merchant Street, between Montgomery and Kearny, devoted to the reduction and assaying of ores—the amalgamating process being facilitated by the application of electricity from a very powerful battery, connecting with Varney's and Taylor's pans. By this process, it is said, that not even the minutest particle of the precious metals is lost.

THE EUROPEAN ORE REFINING COMPANY,

Located on Bryant Street near Third, have in operation Quartz Mills and Furnaces which are engaged in the reduction of ores. The operations of these works are superintended by thorough practical metallurgists, of extensive European experience, and from their success so far their operations are destined to become of permanent importance to the State.

THE SAN FRANCISCO GOLD AND SILVER REFINERY

Is located on Brannan near Seventh Street. The refinery, a substantial brick structure, is one story in height, and sixty feet in width by one hundred and thirty in length, together with the various implements in use, represent a permanently invested capital of about \$60,000. Employment is furnished to an average of from thirty to forty persons. Kellogg, Hewston & Co., proprietors; office 416 Montgomery Street.

There are several other establishments in the city engaged in the refining of gold and silver, viz.: Hentsch & Berton, 432 Montgomery Street; S. Mollitor & Co., 418 Montgomery Street; Riehn, Henime & Co., 408 Montgomery; Greenberg, Ehrlensback & Co., 521 Sacramento Street.

R. B. GRAY & CO.

Manufacturers and Importers of

FINE JEWELRY,

MANUFACTURERS OF CALIFORNIA GOLD COIN,

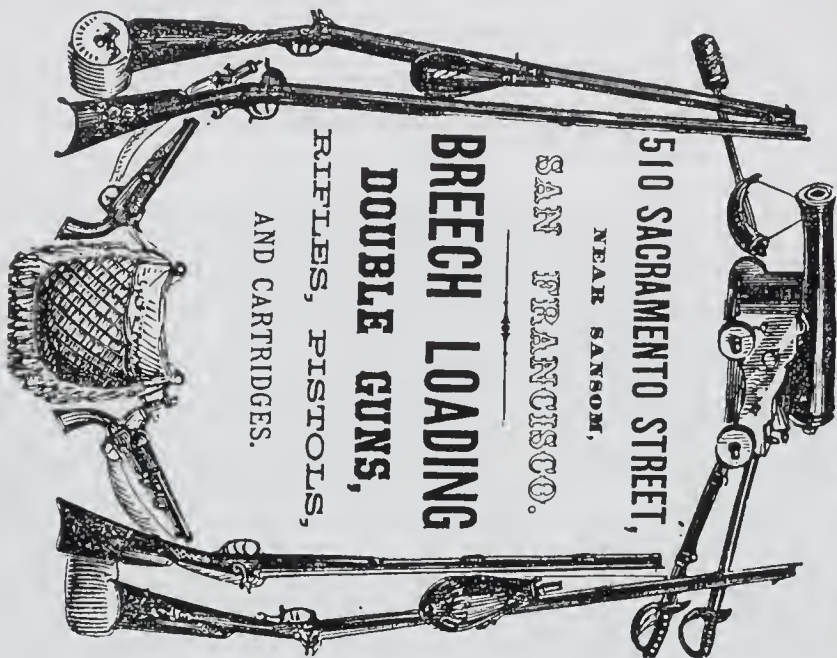
AGENTS FOR THE

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IMPORTER, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL
DEALER IN
Double Guns, Rifles and Pistols, and Crimmings.



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POWDER, SHOT, LEAD AND CAPS.

THE

PACIFIC COAST

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

FOR 1871-73:

CONTAINING THE

NAME AND POST OFFICE ADDRESS OF EACH MERCHANT,
MANUFACTURER AND PROFESSIONAL

RESIDING IN

THE STATES OF CALIFORNIA, OREGON, AND NEVADA; THE TERRITORIES OF
WASHINGTON, IDAHO, MONTANA, UTAH, ARIZONA, AND ALASKA;
AND THE COLONY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

ALSO, A

GAZETTEER OF THE COUNTIES, CITIES AND TOWNS

WITH THE FEDERAL, STATE AND MUNICIPAL OFFICERS ATTACHED THERE TO.

AND

An Exhibit of the Resources of the Pacific Coast.

SECOND YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

COMPILED BY

HENRY G. LANGLEY,

EDITOR OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE REGISTER, PACIFIC COAST ALMANAC, ETC., ETC.

Price Five Dollars, Gold Coin.

SAN FRANCISCO:

HENRY G. LANGLEY, PUBLISHER, 612 CLAY STREET,

BACON & COMPANY, EXERCISION STRAIP PRESSES, 636 CLAY STREET.

In late 1870, Henry G. Langley compiled his Pacific Coast Business Directory for 1871-1873 covering California, Oregon, Nevada, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Arizona, Alaska, and British Columbia. To entice Pacific slope business, Robert B. Gray & Co. advertised that they were "MANUFACTURERS OF CALIFORNIA GOLD COIN."

press. I should like to print up a few numbers on him untill he got enough of newspapers.

The servant I have now is a perfect drone. I get out of patience like Aunt Sally Bailey and go into the kitchen myself. I did quite a washing this morning because she could not suit me, the first I have done for a long time. I feel so well now, I would do my wash if Louie would let me. I have not been better in the country than now.

Please give my love to all, Mother in particular. My half hour is up. Good Bye, write soon & often. Your affectionate Sister,

MARY BONESTELL

Kiss all the children for me.

On the reverse, Mary Bonestell added, "A little gold piece for Mother." Only a 25 or 50-cent Fractional fits the definition of "a little gold piece"--the appropriate California souvenir.

*a little gold piece for
Mother*

The morning Alta California on Steamer Day, Monday, April 16, 1855, set the stage for the next letter when it carried an official notice from Postmaster Charles L. Weller that "From and After this Day, No Letter will be forwarded through the Mails unless postage is paid in advance: Over 3,000 miles, 10 cents." Previously, letters to the east coast had been 6 cents prepaid or 10 cents collect. Now postage jumped 4 cents, or 66 percent!

Writing on April 16, to catch the departing steamer, Louis H. Bonestell described his first vacation since he arrived in the days of old, the days of gold, the days of '49. Pure gold was \$20.67 a troy ounce with dust at \$17.

Dear Brother David:

I have no time to write, but will scratch off a few lines, as Mary is not writing this time for different reasons. One is we have been up country to Nevada City, Marysville &c., and she is nearly tired out, though she stood the journey well. We rode seventy miles one day over a rough road and part of the way in a Mud Wagon, so I think she is as strong as any body. We went mining and Mary got some four dollars out of three pans of dirt. If you could have seen her eyes stick out when she saw the first piece, about 4 cents Worth. She thought she had a fortune.

We went from here to Nevada, staid there three days and while there, it commenced snowing, the first we had seen in the country. We came from there to Marysville. Stopped there a few days and then came home, being absent about ten days--longer than I have been from the city in six years.

Well, another reason that Mary will not write is because they have raised the Postage on letters from here to the Atlantic States to ten

cents, and she considers it an outrage and will not patronize Uncle Sam on account of it.

In your last letter, you gave me short history of the recent hard times. It is even worse here, and if we do not all [get] burnt up and blow away soon, we will be in good luck. I begin to wish myself out of the country, but fear we will not get enough to take us out very soon.

Yours in Great Haste,

L.H. BONESTELL

When Mary resumed writing, perhaps she included "a little piece of gold" for her mother to pair with her "little gold piece." We take leave of Louis Bonestell, who the next year was a clerk in his former store, and went quickly through other investments, jobs, and clerkships until success came.

Robert J. Chandler

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2

1881

BONESTELL, ALLEN & CO.
411, 413, and 415 Sansome Street.

1855

SUBMITTED BY S.P.P.N. MEMBER – AL FREEBURNE

An 1856 BG 311 octagonal half-dollar by A.L. Nouizillet not previously described has been found. On the obverse the fourth star is joined to the border as in state II. A large “cud” break at the seventh star as in state III is easily observed. The entire obverse is sharply doublestruck. The second strike is rotated counter-clockwise a degree or two so that the star outlines from the first strike pass through the center of the stars. The front of Liberty’s coronet is misplaced about 1/32” and is easily visible with the naked eye as is Liberty’s double nose. Doubling on the bottom of the neck, top of the head and bun, and forehead is also pronounced.

This particular coin was graded AU58 by PCGS. Obverse has rainbow toning with no trace of wear grading about MS63. Reverse shows some slight rub and appears normal although the rim is mostly non-existent. There is also a little die rust around the N. The coin was purchased sight unseen from an auction for \$200 including the buyer’s fee. Although doublestrikes are common on many U.S. coins, this is the first pronounced doublestrike I have observed on a fractional gold piece.

HALF DOLLAR OCTAGON



TREASURES OF MANDALAY BAY MUSEUM
A “MUST-SEE” ON YOUR TRIP TO LAS VEGAS:

A KING’S RANSOM IN RARE COINS AND CURRENCY!
TREASURES OF GOLD AND SILVER!
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Come visit the fabulous Treasures of Mandalay Bay Museum. You will see the world’s most valuable exhibit of rare gold and silver coins, paper money (including a \$100,000 bill!), and other treasures—worth a king’s ransom!

Indeed, you will see coins fit for a king—the same rare coins presented by the President of the United States to the King of Siam—the same king who was featured in the famous film and musical, *The King and I*.

The State of Nevada was built on silver and gold—taken from the vast Comstock Lode of ore discovered in 1859. You’ll see how precious metals were mined, and you’ll “visit” Nevada’s own federal mint set up to make coins—the Carson City Mint—and you’ll see a wonderful collection of coins made there. You will see Silver Certificates, Gold Certificates, and other paper money, including notes issued by banks in Nevada. Our Wells Fargo memorabilia exhibit is not to be missed!

You will be dazzled as you become immersed in untold millions of dollars worth of treasure, wealth, Wild West History, romance—when money was really made of gold and silver!

And, our museum store is one-of-a-kind, with old-time coins of gold and silver, interested guides and books, *real* silver dollars over 100 years old, coin collector starter kits, souvenirs, and other items for sale!

The Treasures Of Mandalay Bay Museum is located on the casino level of
The Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino

3950 Las Vegas Blvd., South
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Phone 702-798-1933
www.treasuresofmandalaybay.com

Hours:

9 am to midnight
(Daily, including holidays)

Admission:

\$6 for adults. Children under 12 free

Tickets:

Mandalay Bay Box Office
9 am to 11 pm daily or,
Treasures of Mandalay Bay Museum Store

A unique audio tour covering highlights of the Museum,
created by Q. David Bowers, is available at the
Treasures of Mandalay Bay Museum Store.

The Museum Store features many exciting coins, books, posters, postcards,
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Open 9 am to midnight.

\$100,000 bank notes on display are courtesy of the American Numismatic
Association.

Please, no video taping or photography.



GOLD RUSH GALLERY

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Official Press Release

For Immediate Release

Who: *Gold Rush Gallery*
What: Launch of new website detailing the historical southern gold rush
When: Right Now, February 1, 1999
Where: In the Internet at www.goldrushgallery.com
Why: To preserve our southern gold rush history, and to showcase and share the joy of rare coins

Following America's first recorded discovery of gold in North Carolina in 1799, prospectors began America's first major gold rush in Georgia in 1828 and now Internet surfers can strike gold with their mouse at www.goldrushgallery.com, which opened today. The site preserves the history of the southern gold rush and the establishment of the U.S. Branch Mints in Dahlonega, Georgia and Charlotte, North Carolina.

On the site, users can:

- Learn about *Gold Rush Gallery*, its history and management
- View highlights of "*The Gold Rush Collection*" and two gold 1787 Brasher Doubloons – The World's Most Important Rare Coin
- Learn about the Dahlonega, Georgia Mint and America's First Gold Rush, as well as valuable strategy for collecting Dahlonega gold coins
- View *Gold Rush Gallery's* inventory
- Sell and purchase coins on-line, including more common silver and gold coins of interest to new collectors and those preparing for Y2K
- Find links to other important websites
- Join mailing lists for future updates to the site
- Hear recording artist Danny Ray Cole sing "*Dahlonega Gold Fever*"



One of only seven known examples of the famed gold 1787 Brasher Doubloon, this wonderful coin is the unique variety with Ephraim Brasher's hallmark "EB" stamped on the eagle's breast. The Bushnell/Garrett specimen, it is among the most desirable of all American coins.

Gold Rush Gallery will frequently update the site with historical information, in our quest to be a major resource for serious numismatic (rare coin) researchers & history buffs.

For additional information contact:

Al C. Adams, Jr.
Al Adams Rare Coins, Inc., DBA *Gold Rush Gallery*
1-888-740-1774, info@goldrushgallery.com

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